

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-10

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-----118425 212029Z /45

O P 212002Z DEC 77 ZFF4
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY CAIRO NIACT IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY JIDDA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 303983

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, DJ, EG

SUBJECT: EGYPTIAN CONCERNS RE DJIBOUTI SITUATION
REF: CAIRO 22226

1. WE BELIEVE THAT DJIBOUTI'S RELATIONS WITH ETHIOPIA
ARE PROBABLY AS IMMEDIATE A PROBLEM AS THAT OF INTERNAL
ETHNIC SPLIT. WE WISH TO SHARE OUR VIEWS IN THIS REGARD
WITH GOE BEFORE DEPARTURE OF ANY DIPLOMATIC MISSION.
EMBASSY SHOULD, THEREFORE, SEEK OPPORTUNITY SOONEST TO PASS
FOLLOWING VIEWS TO GOE: USG SHARES GOE CONCERN ABOUT
DETERIORATING DJIBOUTI POLITICAL SITUATION AND IN PRINCIPLE
WOULD FAVOR MOVE WHICH COULD EFFECT SOME KIND OF RECONCILIA-
TION BETWEEN FEUDING ETHNIC ELEMENTS. ALTHOUGH USG CLEARLY
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IS NOT IN A POSITION TO ACT AS INTERMEDIARY BETWEEN SOMALIS
AND AFARS, GOE MAY BE IN GOOD POSITION TO DO SO DESPITE
EGYPTIAN SUPPORT FOR SOMALIA IN THE OGADEN CONFLICT.

2. IN ADDITION TO THE INTERNAL DIVISION OF THE COUNTRY,
A SECOND KEY ELEMENT NECESSARY FOR GROD GOVERNMENTAL
STABILITY IN OUR VIEW IS THE ATTITUDE OF THE TWO NEIGHBORING

POWERS. IT SEEMS TO US THAT ONLY HOPE FOR LONG-TERM SURVIVAL OF DJIBOUTI IS TO MAINTAIN GOOD RELATIONS WITH BOTH SOMALIA AND ETHIOPIA AND TO FOLLOW A POLICY OF NEUTRALITY IN THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE TWO. SINCE USG BELIEVES

THAT SURVIVAL OF DJIBOUTI IS AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN THE LONG-TERM STABILITY OF THE HORN OF AFRICA, USG ENCOURAGES DJIBOUTI TO FOLLOW SUCH A POLICY IRRESPECTIVE OF THE STATE OF OUR OWN RELATIONS WITH EITHER SOMALIA OR ETHIOPIA.

3. UNFORTUNATELY, NEITHER SOMALIA NOR ETHIOPIA HAS MUCH RESPECTED DJIBOUTI'S POSITION, THOUGH SOMALIA, HAVING A NATURAL ADVANTAGE IN POPULATION IN THE CAPITAL AND WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT, SEEMS TO HAVE ERRED MORE IN THIS RESPECT THAN ETHIOPIA. IN ANY CASE, WE BELIEVE THE MOST IMMEDIATE TASK IS TO ATTEMPT TO REVERSE THE DOWNWARD TREND IN THE RELATIONS BETWEEN ADDIS AND DJIBOUTI AND THUS REMOVE SOME OF THE INCENTIVE WHICH PRESUMABLY BRINGS ETHIOPIA TO SUPPORT ANTI-GOVERNMENT GROUPS SUCH AS THE MOVEMENT POPULAIRE DE LIBERATION. (WE NOTE THAT ALTHOUGH SUSPICION IS NATURALLY DIRECTED AT THE MPL FOR THE RECENT TERRORIST INCIDENT IN DJIBOUTI, WE HAVE NO INFORMATION WHICH ESTABLISHES THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE MOVEMENT AND THE INCIDENT.)

4. USG HAS DISCUSSED THIS GENERAL QUESTION WITH HASSAN
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GOULED WHO INDICATED HE VERY MUCH REGRETTED THAT ETHIOPIA DID NOT YET HAVE PROPER DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATION IN DJIBOUTI, AND ASKED US TO APPROACH ADDIS ABABA TO ENCOURAGE THE POSTING IN DJIBOUTI OF SOMEONE OTHER THAN THE PRESENT CHARGE, APPARENTLY AN INTELLIGENCE OFFICER OF NOT VERY SENIOR RANK. WE REPLIED THAT OUR CURRENT RELATIONS WITH ADDIS WERE SUCH THAT AN APPROACH BY US WOULD DO LITTLE FOR DJIBOUTI'S CAUSE. WE DO NOT ASSUME THAT THIS IS A TASK THE GOE COULD PROFITABLY UNDERTAKE EITHER, BUT WE DO BELIEVE IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE GROD CONTINUE TO SEEK TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH ADDIS. CONCERNING THE LEVEL OF DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATION, PART OF THE PROBLEM PROBABLY STEMS FROM THE FACT THAT AT INDEPENDENCE, WHEN THE EPMG NOMINATED ITS CONSUL GENERAL, FITIGU TADESSE, TO BE AMBASSADOR DESIGNATE, THE GROD REFUSED TO ACCEPT HIM. FITIGU IS NOW AMBASSADOR TO ROME.

5. WE WILL BE HAPPY TO HEAR ANY VIEWS GOE MAY HAVE ON USEFUL STEPS TO HELP SUSTAIN DJIBOUTI'S INDEPENDENCE, AND HOPE THEY WILL KEEP US INFORMED OF DEVELOPMENTS IF THEY DO DECIDE TO SEND A SPECIAL DELEGATION. VANCE

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